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*CIA/ONE/STAFF MEM/52-64*

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

16 November 1964

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 52-64 (Internal ONE Working Paper --  
CIA Distribution Only)

SUBJECT: The Post-Khrushchev Collective

NOTE TO THE BOARD

The following, informal memorandum was staff-initiated and is for the information of the Board. It is a speculative survey of the odd bits and pieces which suggest that political infighting within the Soviet leadership is already underway.

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SUBJECT: The Post-Khrushchev Collective

1. We have estimated for quite some time that the period following Khrushchev's death or removal would be one of intense political infighting at the top. There have not been many clear signs of this during the past month, but, needless to say, we are not as yet persuaded that our estimates were wrong. Khrushchev's successors face a variety of major problems -- some old, some generated by his ouster -- and they do so as a collective; surely within this team there is a struggle both for power and over policy. The top level shuffle revealed today does not offer us any specific indications of the way this struggle will ultimately be resolved, but it does tend to confirm its existence. (See paras. 11-14). In any case, we have continued to look for even small signs of dissension and maneuver and, in fact, we have even found a few.

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Additions

2. Some of these signs should perhaps be classified more as additions than convincing clues. They could be explained by such factors as the new leadership's inexperience, its preoccupation with day-to-day problems, and the uncertainty of the press in this new situation. Nonetheless, they also reflect at a minimum some high level confusion about how best to present the public image of the new regime, and, at a maximum, some jockeying for position among the contenders. In either event, they represent precisely the sort of minor irregularities which are being watched very closely within the USSR itself.

a. The official biographies of Brezhnev and Kosygin released by Tass on 15 October contrasted sharply with one another. Brezhnev's was presented in a rather straightforward manner, Kosygin's in a highly laudatory way. One gathers that Brezhnev is a good man who has had a very successful career in the party, but that Kosygin is a remarkable man who has made many great contributions to Soviet life in general. The difference in tone and treatment accorded the two men was not at all subtle and could not have been missed by even casual readers.

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b. Kosygin's election to the premiership by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet was declared to be unanimous, Brezhnev's election to the First Secretaryship by the Central Committee was not. This may merely reflect the truth of the situation, but official announcements need not have made a point of it. This may have occurred to Brezhnev who has since referred to the "atmosphere" of complete unanimity at the 14 October Central Committee meeting.

c. The appearances of the new Soviet leaders and the publication of their names in the press have not conformed to the kind of set pattern one might have expected. Thus, Brezhnev has not shown up at a number of functions, such as the honoring of the Soviet Olympic team, where his presence would have seemed to be desirable; certainly we have no reason to believe that the man is adverse to favorable publicity. And thus, in the list of those signing an official obituary, Kosygin, but not Brezhnev, honored a deceased high level functionary of the party's Russian Bureau; this was odd because Kosygin has no known ties with that Bureau, though Brezhnev, as First Secretary, does.

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d. The protocol arrangements for leadership appearances have been fairly consistent; Brezhnev, Kosygin, Mikoyan, Suslov, and Podgorny, in that order. But some photographic displays for the 7 November ceremonies placed Suslov after Podgorny and this is, in fact, where Suslov belonged before Khrushchev's ouster. The inconsistent treatment of Kozlov -- for the first time dropped in a listing of Presidium members but included as a member in the photographs -- is also peculiar.

e. Kosygin's speech during the Cosmonaut celebration on 16 October was published in all of the Moscow newspapers save one, Sovetskaya Rossiya, the organ of the Russian (RSFSR) Federation. Brezhnev's speech on the same occasion made that paper and all the others. Not running a major address by a top leader presumably requires a negative decision of the sort not ordinarily made merely by an editor.

f. On 5 November, the organ of the Ukrainian Party announced that the Ukrainian Central Committee and Council of Ministers, has relaxed restrictions placed on the private ownership of agricultural plots and livestock. Brezhnev, speaking two days later, referred to such a relaxation as a new

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policy for the country as a whole. It is most unusual for a major step of this sort -- one of the few unambiguous policy moves made so far by the new leadership -- to be announced first, and out of the blue, by a republican organ. It may, of course, have been set up in advance in Moscow, but it does tend to raise speculation that Brezhnev had been scooped and that the initiative for this sensible, and no doubt popular, move came from Ukrainian First Secretary Shelest (and, perhaps, his mentor in Moscow, Iodgorny).

#### Sins of Omission

3. What the new regime has not done in some areas is perhaps as interesting and suggestive. Some gloss, some ambiguity was to be expected, partly because of unresolved policy issues, partly because of the new leadership's political need to assert legitimacy and continuity, and partly because it does not at this point wish to frighten or alienate its constituents. Even so, the failure to act in the instances cited below has overtones of infighting.

a. As far as we know, all Presidium and Secretariat members save one (Polynkov), all government ministers, and all

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major republican and provincial officials have so far retained their posts and have been given better ones. Further changes in personnel and new appointments are sooner or later inevitable. That they may come later rather than sooner could merely reflect a consensus that shifts should be held to a relative minimum and be effected gradually. But more likely, we think, is a stasis of sorts induced by uncertainty and disagreement about who gets what and for that matter, who gets it.

b. The most obvious and most significant post-Khrushchevian fact in this regard is the new leadership's failure to replace the Old Man as Chairman of the Central Committee Bureau for the RSFSR. This by all accounts is a key job, one which would be much sought after by any politician seeking to expand his power; it is inconceivable that the post would go begging. Polyansky, Voronov, Kirilenko and Yetremov are all logical and powerful contenders and there are others as well. Even those at the top level who would not be directly involved in maneuvering for this position would have a stake in the appointment.

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c. Even the relatively minor changes in personnel made prior to the November shuffle may have reflected some kind of backstage maneuvering. According to current Moscow chitchat, the replacement of Adzhubei and of Kharlamov (TV chief) by a couple of hack ideologues was the result of moves by party secretary Ilichev (who, of course, could have been fronting for someone higher up). The off-again, on-again status of Pravda editor Satyukov (just recently confirmed as fired) presumably involved some infighting over his replacement; rumor had it. Ilichev was also involved in this problem, sought to name a man of his own, but had been blocked. (Satyukov's replacement, Rummyantsev, editor of Problems of Peace and Socialism, is not obviously the protege of one or another of the leaders, but he did serve in the early fifties under Podgorny in the Ukraine.)

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Personalities and Interest Groups

4. Surely there are personal friendships among the new leaders and the formation of cliques may in time reflect such ties. But all of these men are -- and must be -- ruthless politicians (and, needless to say, most or all were once friends of Khrushchev too). If there are friendships, there are apparent enmities too, and it would be our guess that these are likely to figure larger in terms of political import. The apparent rivalry under Khrushchev between Brezhnev and Podgorny for the heir apparent post is not likely to be forgotten for long. And the rumored dislike of Kirilenko for Voronov may someday count for more than if the situation between the two men were one of even durable buddyhood.

5. Personalities aside, the current split between party (Brezhnev) and state (Kosygin) and the existence of a "Ukrainian group" at the highest levels could create all kinds of trouble.\*

\*The case of Nikolai Podgorny is the most intriguing one for current speculation. A close friend and protege of Khrushchev, Podgorny seems since June 1963 to have operated with Brezhnev as one of the two heirs apparent. His backers presumably would include the Ukrainian party, under Shelest, and an old crony in the CPSU Secretariat, Vitaly Titov. He thus represents a formidable force and a potential challenger to old rival Brezhnev. But, to date, Podgorny has taken a back seat in the new leadership -- he did not even go to Kiev for the Ukrainian Liberation ceremonies. Unless we have grossly misinterpreted the nature of the man, Podgorny would seem to be an early candidate for either up or out.

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The efforts of various interest groupings within Soviet society to take advantage of the change in leadership to press their own cases will also play a role in the contention.

6. Thus, for example, Malinovsky's arrogant outburst at the reception on 7 November, together with the exultant tone of Red Star in the wake of Khrushchev's ouster, suggests the notion that the Soviet military plan to make the most of any period of political and policy uncertainty.\* And indeed, why not? There is general agreement among US observers that the military did not play a direct role in the removal, and there has long been a consensus that the military establishment does not seek political control. But Malinovsky would not turn down a seat on the Presidium and surely some of the marshals were sounded out in advance of the coup (even though their discontent with Khrushchev's policies was well known). Presumably they were assured that their interests would not suffer. Now it is the military's job to make sure, in fact, that their interests prosper.

\*Grechko's behaviour in Rumania, so rude as to lead to Rumanian officers to boycott the Soviet reception in Bucharest on 7 November, may also be a case in point.

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The Concept of Collectivity CIA INTERNAL USE ONLY

7. The Central Committee apparently agreed on 14 October that one man should not hold both the First Secretaryship and the Premiership. This presumably reflected more than a natural revulsion against Khrushchev's handling of these posts and more than the desire of the rank and file on the Committee to Stabilize "collective leadership". Mainly, it appears to have been a move to block the assumption of power by one man (presumably Brezhnev). It is easier, obviously, to gain a consensus for someone's removal than to name his successor.

8. Pravda and other papers have of late made quite a thing of the collectivity of the new team. In Kossygin's no doubt authorized biography, there is a novel statement about the function of the party Presidium: this body is "the collegiate organ of the party which carries out operative guidance in the periods between the Central Committee plenums." This relative downplaying of the functions of the Presidium has not been picked up by Brezhnev, who, in fact, has not paid very much attention in his public statements to the question of collectivity.

9. In any event, the notion of true collectivity within the Soviet system is not a viable one. Neither the nature of the problems faced by the leadership nor the institutions of rule

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-- not to mention the general atmosphere of suspicion at the top --  
lend themselves to anything other than one-man leadership.  
Collectivity really works only temporarily and even then only when  
there is no alternative.

#### Policy Issues

10. The leadership is likely to divide in part along policy lines. Some of the issues -- economic, Sino-Soviet, etc., -- need no spelling out here. But, there are, in addition, new issues to be considered. The most obvious one, how to slice up the political power vacated by Khrushchev, will agitate all the leaders and most of their followers. The resolution, or lack of resolution, of this problem, will, of course, have implications across the political and policy board. Another new problem, that of deKhrushchevization, is also of general import and is a particularly sticky one. Whether the bad handling of this issue to date is the result of outside pressures and demurrals or of inside disagreement cannot now be seen. But it could be that it is both.

#### The Top Level Changes

11. As this memorandum was going into the typewriter it was learned from press services in Moscow that the Central Committee had made a number of high level personnel changes. The ailing Kozlov was dropped from the Presidium -- a formal move confirming his de facto absence -- and Vassily Polyakov was

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removed from the Secretariat. Polyakov was Chairman of the Central Committee Bureau for Agriculture, a Khrushchev protégé, and a friend of both Sot'yukov, ousted Pravda editor, and A.S. Shevchenko, Khrushchev's personal adviser on agriculture. He may also have been fairly close to candidate Presidium member Yefremov. Some observers have also speculated that he had good ties with Brezhnev, bad ones with Polyansky.

12. Elevated to the Presidium in this shuffle was Petr Shelest, a candidate member and Ukrainian party chief, and Aleksandr Shelepin, a party secretary and chief of the Party-State Control Commission. Petr Demichev, also a party secretary and chief of the Central Committee Bureau for the Light and Chemical Industries, was made a candidate member of the Presidium. Whether the latter two retained their previous posts has not been announced as yet.

13. What all this, the first big change since Khrushchev's removal, adds up to is moot. Polyakov may have been so closely associated with Khrushchev and his "hare-brained" schemes for agriculture as to make his continued presence in the higher councils intolerable; trouble is, most of these men were closely tied in with Khrushchev. The promotion of Shelest suggests a feather in Podgorny's cap, and the one for Shelepin sounds a little as if the KGB were being rewarded (Shelepin's man,

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Semichastny is still KGB chief). Demichev has long been tied into the Moscow and central party apparat and his promotion may have been intended to give this quarter a more prestigious voice within the collective. It could also be interpreted as a reward for Demichev's going along with the ouster of his mentor, Khrushchev.

14. It does not appear at first blush that the nature of the collective has been radically altered by these developments. The hand of one man seeking to bolster his own position is not visible. Podgorny may have been strengthened by the appointment of Shelest to the Presidium, but it is certainly conceivable that Brezhnev's role has been reinforced by the promotion of Shelepin. In other words, there may have been a certain amount of counterbalancing going on. If, in fact, the new collectivity remains intact, maneuvering will continue.

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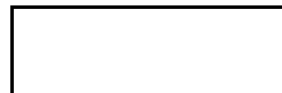
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Afterthought

15. Soviet politics are not normally played out on the surface. This secrecy, however, is not a reflection of the quantity of the politics involved -- it is, rather, a function of their quality (or lack of it). The point is, this game certainly does not stop with the death or removal of the leader, but in a very real sense it starts again.

16. There is no way for us to estimate how long present collective arrangements will survive and who ultimately is destined to win out. But then, there is no way for them to estimate this either.



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"I've been away. Who's inside?"